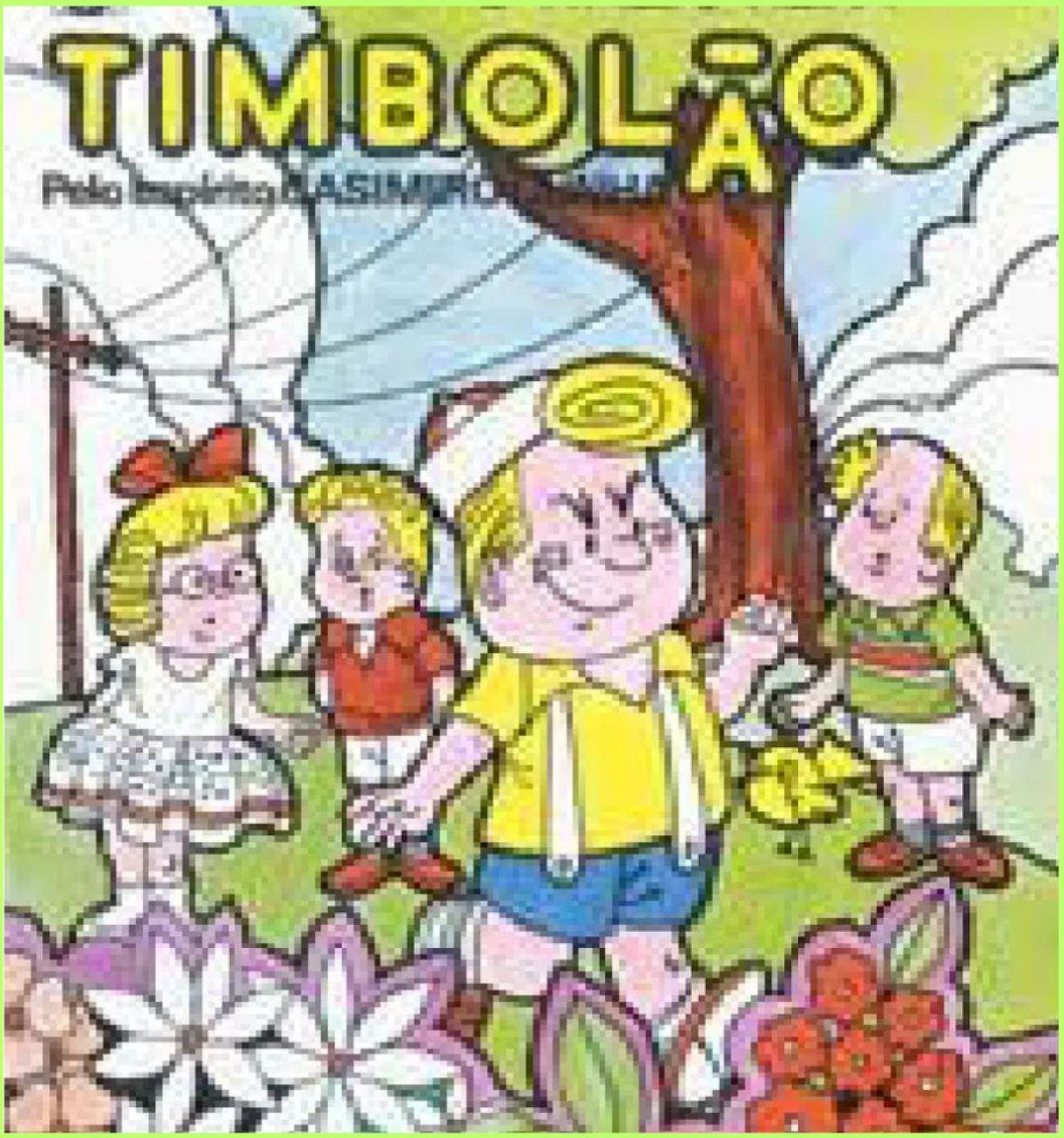
Francisco C. Xavier



Waldo Vieira

Casimiro Cunha

TIMBOLÃO

My children, those who do wrong
will learn through wrong's return.
Let us see the sad old case
of little Timbolão and learn.

***

Though well grown, strong and lively,
cheerful, handsome, full of flair,
he was naughty, wild, and teasing,
was that boy, beyond repair.

***

He was expelled from school one day,
filling Mother's heart with pain;
he threw five bombs, without a thought,
upon the teacher's desk in vain.

***

Near the neighbors' humble homes
he raised havoc without pause,
setting fire to the garden beds
and stoning windowpanes and walls.

***

He opened trunks and iron chests,
handling the old sharp awl with glee,
and even stuck sharp pins at times
in blind men's hands out on the street.

***

Mrs. Custódia, the dear mother
Would always speak to him this way:
— Ah! my son, be kind and good,
have mercy, I beg you, pray.

***

But the stubborn little boy
paid little heed to advice;
after hearing his dear mother,
he broke glasses, mirrors, and ice.

***

One day he made a snake,
all of wire and paper thin,
trying to cause a nasty fall
for poor Mrs. Isabel, unseen.

***

Later he placed in the kitchen
a large banana peel,
trying to cause another fall
for washerwoman Donana to feel.

***

But the boy then forgot
and went to play near the sink;
he suddenly slipped and fell,
in a tumble quicker than you'd think.

***

To the screams of the whole house,
in the noise of fear and dismay,
down the staircase goes tumbling
the mischievous Timbolão that day.

***

Dona Custódia, crying hard,
arrives with weary pace;
Timbolão looked just like
a blood-soaked rag doll in that place.

***

To clean his nose, they brought
a very large pillowcase;
the blood was flowing freely,
the fall had been dreadful in its trace.

***

He screamed and cried so much,
and seemed in such bad shape,
that he rushed at once
to a hospital bed in haste.

***

The doctor examined him,
showing deep concern;
then spoke, deeply troubled:
— Poor Timbolão, how sad a turn!

***

He had broken two teeth,
his forehead was swollen wide,
and his right leg was badly hurt,
all wounded and broken inside.

***

***

Wrapped in bandages tight,
with sad eyes and a pale face thin,
he began receiving serum
and plenty of penicillin.

***

But the leg grew worse each day,
the inflammation was severe;
so the doctor, without delay,
ordered surgery, full of fear.

***

Timbolão, tied upon the table,
groaned in desperate pain,
yet remembered, always, always,
that he himself was to blame.

***

When the treatment was finally done,
he seemed renewed in every way,
and hugged his dear mother closely,
now attentive in his study and play.

***

Sadly, the boy,
for having been so unkind,
was now well-behaved at last,
but was left with a wooden leg behind.

***

There is no effect without a cause.
If all this happened to Timbolão,
it was due to his behavior
and his disregard for good counsel.

*****